

Department of Justice

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§51.6 Political subunits.

All political subunits within a covered jurisdiction (*e.g.*, counties, cities, school districts) that have not terminated coverage by obtaining the declaratory judgment described in section 4(a) of the Act are subject to the requirements of section 5.

[Order 3262–2011, 76 FR 21243, Apr. 15, 2011]

§51.7 Political parties.

Certain activities of political parties are subject to the preclearance requirement of section 5. A change affecting voting effected by a political party is subject to the preclearance requirement:

(a) If the change relates to a public electoral function of the party and

(b) If the party is acting under authority explicitly or implicitly granted by a covered jurisdiction or political subunit subject to the preclearance requirement of section 5.

For example, changes with respect to the recruitment of party members, the conduct of political campaigns, and the drafting of party platforms are not subject to the preclearance requirement. Changes with respect to the conduct of primary elections at which party nominees, delegates to party conventions, or party officials are chosen are subject to the preclearance requirement of section 5. Where appropriate the term “jurisdiction” (but not “covered jurisdiction”) includes political parties.

§51.8 Section 3 coverage.

Under section 3(c) of the Act, a court in voting rights litigation can order as relief that a jurisdiction not subject to the preclearance requirement of section 5 preclear its voting changes by submitting them either to the court or to the Attorney General. Where a jurisdiction is required under section 3(c) to preclear its voting changes, and it elects to submit the proposed changes to the Attorney General for preclearance, the procedures in this part will apply.

§51.9 Computation of time.

(a) The Attorney General shall have 60 days in which to interpose an objection to a submitted change affecting

voting for which a response on the merits is appropriate (*see* §51.35, §51.37).

(b) The 60-day period shall commence upon receipt of a submission by the Voting Section of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division or upon receipt of a submission by the Office of the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, if the submission is properly marked as specified in §51.24(f). The 60-day period shall recommence upon the receipt in like manner of a resubmission (*see* §51.35), information provided in response to a written request for additional information (*see* §51.37(b)), or material, supplemental information or a related submission (*see* §51.39).

(c) The 60-day period shall mean 60 calendar days, with the day of receipt of the submission not counted, and with the 60th day ending at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time of that day. If the final day of the period should fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or any day designated as a holiday by the President or Congress of the United States, or any other day that is not a day of regular business for the Department of Justice, the next full business day shall be counted as the final day of the 60-day period. The date of the Attorney General’s response shall be the date on which it is transmitted to the submitting authority by any reasonable means, including placing it in a postbox of the U.S. Postal Service or a private mail carrier, sending it by telefacsimile, email, or other electronic means, or delivering it in person to a representative of the submitting authority.

[Order 3262–2011, 76 FR 21243, Apr. 15, 2011]

§51.10 Requirement of action for declaratory judgment or submission to the Attorney General.

Section 5 requires that, prior to enforcement of any change affecting voting, the jurisdiction that has enacted or seeks to administer the change must either:

(a) Obtain a judicial determination from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia that the voting change neither has the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

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(b) Make to the Attorney General a proper submission of the change to which no objection is interposed.

It is unlawful to enforce a change affecting voting without obtaining preclearance under section 5. The obligation to obtain such preclearance is not relieved by unlawful enforcement.

[52 FR 490, Jan. 6, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987, as amended by Order 3262–2011, 76 FR 21243, Apr. 15, 2011]

§51.11 Right to bring suit.

Submission to the Attorney General does not affect the right of the submitting authority to bring an action in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for a declaratory judgment that the change affecting voting neither has the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

[Order 3262–2011, 76 FR 21243, Apr. 15, 2011]

§51.12 Scope of requirement.

Except as provided in §51.18 (Federal court-ordered changes), the section 5 requirement applies to any change affecting voting, even though it appears to be minor or indirect, returns to a prior practice or procedure, seemingly expands voting rights, or is designed to remove the elements that caused the Attorney General to object to a prior submitted change. The scope of section 5 coverage is based on whether the generic category of changes affecting voting to which the change belongs (for example, the generic categories of changes listed in §51.13) has the potential for discrimination. *NAACP v. Hampton County Election Commission*, 470 U.S. 166 (1985). The method by which a jurisdiction enacts or administers a change does not affect the requirement to comply with section 5, which applies to changes enacted or administered through the executive, legislative, or judicial branches.

[Order 3262–2011, 76 FR 21244, Apr. 15, 2011]

§51.13 Examples of changes.

Changes affecting voting include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

(a) Any change in qualifications or eligibility for voting.

(b) Any change concerning registration, balloting, and the counting of votes and any change concerning publicity for or assistance in registration or voting.

(c) Any change with respect to the use of a language other than English in any aspect of the electoral process.

(d) Any change in the boundaries of voting precincts or in the location of polling places.

(e) Any change in the constituency of an official or the boundaries of a voting unit (*e.g.*, through redistricting, annexation, deannexation, incorporation, dissolution, merger, reapportionment, changing to at-large elections from district elections, or changing to district elections from at-large elections).

(f) Any change in the method of determining the outcome of an election (*e.g.*, by requiring a majority vote for election or the use of a designated post or place system).

(g) Any change affecting the eligibility of persons to become or remain candidates, to obtain a position on the ballot in primary or general elections, or to become or remain holders of elective offices.

(h) Any change in the eligibility and qualification procedures for independent candidates.

(i) Any change in the term of an elective office or an elected official, or any change in the offices that are elective (*e.g.*, by shortening or extending the term of an office; changing from election to appointment; transferring authority from an elected to an appointed official that, in law or in fact, eliminates the elected official's office; or staggering the terms of offices).

(j) Any change affecting the necessity of or methods for offering issues and propositions for approval by referendum.

(k) Any change affecting the right or ability of persons to participate in pre-election activities, such as political campaigns.

(l) Any change that transfers or alters the authority of any official or governmental entity regarding who